



## Navigation

[Home](#)  
[Countries](#)  
[Fleets](#)  
[War-time Stories](#)  
[Survivor Stories](#)  
[Shipping News](#)  
[Sitemap](#)

[Fleets](#) > [The Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company \(Shell\)](#) >

## Manvantara and Merula

Manvantara Captain W.L.Happee, and Merula Captain G.J. Tapperwijn two large tankers of the Dutch-Shell group loaded with diesel oil, navy fuel and aviation spirit, en-route to Batavia in company with three other tankers were attacked by Japanese low level bombers, these attacks with bombs and incendiary shells, the vessels were eventually set on fire and eventually sank. Captain Happee and Chief Officer Mr. P.C. Elsevier and others were overtaken by blazing oil on the sea and disappeared amid the flames. British Australian navy ships "HMS Bulan and HMAS Toowoomba" rescued some survivors who were landed in Java. The military situation in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies deteriorated, the fall of Singapore 15 February 1942 had world-wide repercussions on the sea-borne oil trade. Oil from the far east was denied to the Allies, more reliance was now placed on supplies from the Persian Gulf, from Venezuela, and the America's Japanese supremacy now inflicted huge losses on the Shell Group, personnell and property, many were killed, wounded, or became p o w's in the East Indies.

Eleven deep sea tankers, two British and nine Dutch were sunk by enemy action, 451 coasting vessels were destroyed.

Ten ocean-going tankers were saved and sailed at tremendous risk to the crew, manned by British and Dutch Officers, and sailed across the dangerous stretch of Indian Ocean, to Colombo or the Seychelle Islands.